

National Park Service
Briefing for Associate Director for Cultural Resources and Assistant Associates
February 6, 2006

Hurricane Response

Summary: Following Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, the cultural resources programs of the National Park Service responded with guidance on recovery and stabilization of sites, structures, and objects in the impacted areas. NPS has provided coordination for cultural resources under Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11 and, in response to FEMA requests, has volunteered staff assistance for FEMA headquarters, the National Response Coordination Center, and the Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi Joint Field Offices (JFO). NPS has collaborated with other federal and non-federal partners, such as FEMA and the Heritage Emergency National Task Force. In response to needs identified by State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), other state representatives, and FEMA, NPS has provided site documentation, technical information, training, and limited on-site assistance, and developed new tools specifically to meet the needs of the states. NPS has also served as a clearinghouse for information, preparing reports on the status of sites impacted by the hurricanes, public service announcements, and media advisories.

Note: The NPS response to park sites impacted by the hurricanes is not covered in this briefing.

Background: The National Park Service participates on the Department of the Interior (DOI) Environmental Safeguards Group (ESG), which coordinates DOI participation in ESF #11 under the National Response Plan. DOI is the lead agency for the Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties (NCH) component of ESF #11. Other agencies with lead roles under ESF #11 are NOAA and USDA. Ann Hitchcock represents NPS cultural resources and Dan Hamson represents NPS natural resources on the ESG. The Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, as the DOI coordinator for ESF #11, asked Ann to serve as the DOI coordinator for the cultural resources component of the NCH response to the 2005 hurricane season. The standard operating procedure is that FEMA requests assistance from ESF #11, and the participating ESF #11 agencies collaborate to respond. Each bureau has an executive agent to commit its resources. The NPS executive agent is Steve Martin (Don Murphy alternate). Bureaus that have volunteered staff in response to requests for cultural resources expertise include, at DOI, BIA, FWS, and NPS and at USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Services Administration. The ESF #11 lead agencies may, as necessary, call upon other Federal agencies to assist in a response.

NPS Response:

1. National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) added hurricane technical assistance to its home page, www.ncptt.nps.gov, and provided links to NPS and non-NPS information. The NCPTT web site is a primary national information resource. NPS provides direct links to this page at <http://www.nps.gov/katrina/>, where NPS posts all information on hurricane response and recovery.
2. NCPTT worked with FEMA, the affected states, and other preservation partners to design a Rapid Building and Site Condition Assessment (RBSCA) form and a Detailed Building and Site Condition Assessment form, instruction guide, glossary, and related tools and guidance. NCPTT developed companion databases for related data collection accessible at www.ncptt.nps.gov.
3. NCPTT is preparing a guidance document stating the best practices and concerns inherent in the survey of impacted cultural resources.
4. Cultural Resources Geographic Information Systems Facility (CRGIS) provided maps of National Register Historic districts in the impacted areas to the Mississippi and Louisiana SHPOs for use by FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers to inform decisions on preservation and demolition in the districts. CRGIS arranged to have Geographic Information Systems (GIS) licenses installed for the Mississippi and Louisiana SHPOs to assist in this work.
5. CRGIS staff is serving as chief strategist for FEMA's historic preservation data management. CRGIS is working closely with FEMA to develop an integrated "geodatabase" system and directing the "Red Tag" survey to gather data for the system. FEMA and the Louisiana SHPO will use the data to make determinations regarding preservation and demolition.

6. The National Register of Historic Places compiled information on National Register listings in the gulf coast areas impacted by Katrina and Rita for posting on the NCPTT web site.
7. HABS/HAER/HALS provided data on existing documentation for sites in the impacted areas for posting on the NCPTT web site.
8. Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) and Cultural Resources, WASO, have compiled information on recovery of flooded buildings and wet objects, including related *Conserve O Grams*. This information is available on the HFC and NCPTT web sites.
9. In cooperation with Historic Natchez Foundation and Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET), HFC and Natchez NHP provided a workshop on recovering water-damaged collections. Over 60 attended the workshop, which was held on September 15. It was repeated, in cooperation with SOLINET and the University of Southern Mississippi, a week later in Hattiesburg, where an additional 50 attended. NCPTT is working with the American Institute for Conservation, FEMA, the Louisiana SHPO, and Louisiana Association of Museums to provide a series of three wet recovery workshops March 15-20.
10. NPS incident management teams with cultural resources components answered questions and provided technical assistance to non-NPS sites and private citizens in the impacted areas near NPS sites. For example, the NPS team helped the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, University of Southern Mississippi, salvage an important herbarium collection.
11. NPS offered three volunteers to staff the ESF #11 desk at the National Response Coordination Center. (The volunteers were not scheduled to serve.)
12. In response to a FEMA request, NPS established a list of 130 NPS volunteers with a wide range of natural and cultural resources expertise. The list includes 102 with cultural resources expertise, and 67 experienced with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106. The cultural resources skills identified by FEMA are: historical architects, historic preservation specialists (NHPA-106), architectural historians, archeologists, historic preservation trainers, collections management specialists, historic building technology experts, and historic preservation generalists.
13. In response to Mission Assignments through ESF #11, NPS has provided the following cultural resources employees to fill the identified need:
 - a. FEMA headquarters
 - i. NHPA specialist (John Sprinkle, Cultural Resources, WASO)
 - b. JFO-FL
 - i. Historic preservation specialist (Kathy Foppes, Gateway NRA)
 - c. JFO-LA
 - i. Historic building technology expert/historical architects (Andy Ferrell, NCPTT; Charles Tonetti, Independence NHP; Mary Striegel, NCPTT)
 - ii. Collections management specialists (Diana Pardue, Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island National Monuments; Tyra Walker, Museum Resource Center, National Capital Region; Blair Davenport, Death Valley National Park; Al Levitan, Harpers Ferry Center)
 - iii. Data management coordinator (Deidre McCarthy, Cultural Resources, WASO)
 - iv. Data management specialist (Sean Clifford, NCPTT)
 - v. Tribal historic preservation specialist (James Charles, Bighorn Canyon NRA; Alexa Roberts, Sand Creek Massacre NHS)
 - d. JFO-MS
 - i. Archeologists (Ted Birkedal, Ken Schoenberg, Alaska Regional Office; Dabney Ford, Roger Moore, Chaco Culture NHP; Julie Bell, Amy Hammermeister, Tim Hovezak, Gay Ives, Mesa Verde NP; Brandon Bies, George Washington Memorial Parkway; Brinnen Carter, Southeast Archeological Center; Joe Labadie, Amistad NRA; Carolyn Orbann, Joshua Tree NP)
 - ii. Historic preservation generalist (Terry Winschel, Vicksburg NMP; Keven Walker, Antietam NB; Jamie Clapper, Midwest Regional Office; Mary Tidlow, Denali NP)
 - iii. Architectural historian (Vicky Jacobson, Intermountain Region-Santa Fe; Judith Collins, Indiana Dunes NL)
 - iv. ESF #11 NCH Coordinator (Frank Fiala, Keweenaw NHP)

14. Cultural Resources, WASO, provided a background paper that was used to prepare Director Fran Mainella's speech to the annual conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation on September 28 in Portland, OR, and worked with Public Affairs to issue a related media advisory.
15. Cultural Resources, WASO, worked with WASO Public Affairs, the National Incident Management Team, and Jean Lafitte NHP to prepare a public service announcement for television on preservation and recovery tips for cultural resources. Specialists from Harpers Ferry Center and National Capital Region provided background information. Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB) produced and began airing the announcement November 5, 2005. The Director wrote a letter of support for a LPB grant proposal for a one-hour television documentary on historic preservation and coastal erosion, entitled "Under Siege: Endangered Forts of the Mississippi Delta."
16. Cultural Resources, WASO, maintains a list of historic sites and museums impacted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma on the NCPTT web site.
17. Cultural Resources staff members independently respond to requests for technical information by telephone and e-mail.
18. Associate Director Jan Matthews testified November 1, 2005, at hearing entitled "Historic Preservation vs. Katrina: What Role Should Federal, State and Local Governments Play in Preserving Historic Properties Affected by this Catastrophic Storm?" The hearing was held by the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census.

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